

# The Boundary Waters Permanent Protection Bill



## BILL SUMMARY

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) is America's most-visited wilderness area and the crown jewel of Minnesota. It contains 1.1 million acres of clean water and intact woodlands. 70% of Minnesotans across all political backgrounds want to see the Boundary Waters permanently protected from copper-nickel mining.

The Boundary Waters Permanent Protection Bill prohibits sulfide-ore copper mining operations on State lands in the BWCAW Watershed in Northeastern Minnesota. This bill would protect the Boundary Waters and Voyageurs National Park (VNP) from the inevitable and devastating damage that would result from sulfide-ore copper mining pollution in its watershed. 100% of sulfide-ore copper mines have had spills or accidental releases, and pollution from proposed sulfide-ore copper mining on lands upstream of the BWCAW and VNP would flow directly into the system of pristine lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands in the Wilderness. **The bill ONLY applies to sulfide-ore copper mining and does NOT prohibit or otherwise impact existing or future taconite, iron ore, sand, gravel, and granite mining.**

**Copper has *never* been mined in Minnesota and is  
America's most toxic industry.**

## FAQ:

### The global demand for copper and critical minerals:

- Trace metals extracted from a Twin Metals mine would be both insignificant and irrelevant to America's security and clean energy transition.
- Antofagasta, the Chilean owner of Twin Metals, sends its metal concentrates to low cost smelters in China for processing. The refined metals are then sold on the world market. Twin Metals would benefit Chile and China, not the U.S.

### Mining isn't the answer to boost the local economy:

- A Harvard economics study shows that a recreation-based economy in this region is more sustainable than the boom and bust economy generated by mining.
- Tourism in Northeastern Minnesota generates \$913 million in revenue per year and creates 17,000 jobs that support local families and businesses.

### Minnesota's current permitting process doesn't protect the Boundary Waters:

- The State's current mining rules do not protect the Boundary Waters from pollution. While State and Federal laws prohibit any water quality degradation within the BWCAW, these outdated rules fail to ban sulfide-ore copper mining in the upstream areas of the Wilderness, leaving it vulnerable to irreversible harm.
- The Boundary Waters Permanent Protection Bill extends the existing state ban on mining in the BWCAW to also prohibit both sulfide-ore copper mining and issuance of sulfide-ore copper mining permits, licenses, and leases on state-owned land within the Rainy River Headwaters portion of the Boundary Waters watershed.

